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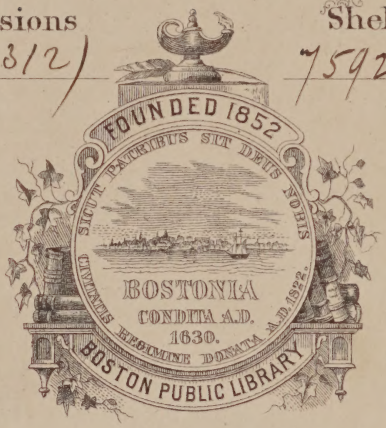

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PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

PUBLIC MEETING,

ON BEHALF OF THE

Printing Fund for the Blind,

HELD AT TREMONT TEMPLE,

ON FRIDAY, APRIL 1ST, 1881.

AN APPEAL FOR LIGHT.

BOSTON:
WRIGHT & POTTER PRINTING COMPANY;
18 POST OFFICE SQUARE.
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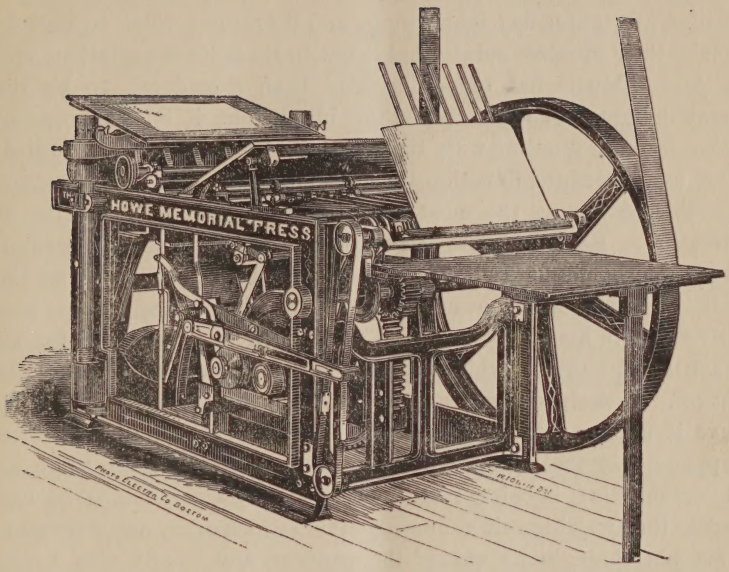

PRINTING FUND FOR THE BLIND.

In January last the following appeal for providing the means for enlarging the library of embossed books, extracted from the forty-ninth annual report of the trustees of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind, was issued in raised type by the "Howe Memorial Press" and widely circulated among the generous and the benevolent of the community: —

The great book of nature, with its myriad pages of beauty, its endless variety of scenery, and its ever-changing aspects of sea and sky, is constantly open to the seeing. The achievements of art can be enjoyed by them at all times and seasons, and literature gives them daily something new and fair to feast upon. How different is the lot of the blind, and how few are the privileges of

this sort which they enjoy! Yet even for these children of misfortune a brighter day is dawning, and literature, which is, next to music, their greatest solace, holds out to them its consolations and its joys. Music has indeed usually been considered to be the great delight and specialty of the blind; but it is the belief of those who are familiar with their tastes, that, besides their world-wide acknowledged devotion to and appreciation of this art, they are likewise among the most ardent worshippers at the shrine of literature. Enter a room where some seeing person is reading aloud to the blind, and note the intense interest with which the older members of the group hang on the lips of the reader, how they drink in his every word! This is their compensation for all the beautiful things which others enjoy and from which they are cut off. A seeing person may well imbibe the love of study, if he have it not by nature, from intercourse with the blind. It often happens that the seeing youth glances about the room while an important work is being read. He grows restless, thinks he can peruse it as well himself at another time (which often never comes), jerks his chair, looks out of the window, and finally asks to be excused. His blind friend sits in an attitude of intense enjoyment and appreciation, draws a long breath when the reading is over, as if it had been almost too good, treasures up all the historic facts or philosophic truths in the storehouse of his memory, and leaves the room enlightened and enriched. Those golden hours are treasures which he never forgets to count over with pride and pleasure. The mention of the title of each well-prized book brings a smile to his face. He has 'lived through' literature, not dreamed over it.

How more than happy, then, is he, when it offers itself to the tips of his own fingers, when he need look to no seeing person to step in as an interpreter between his author and himself! This is the work to which the most earnest energies of the friends of the blind should now be directed; namely, the foundation of a choice library of embossed books for their personal use. The noble thoughts of great minds were never meant to be shut off from those who are bereft of sight. Nay, how gratifying must it be to an author to see that his works have been laid open for their use! It is as if they had been translated into another language, so difficult is the process which has to be gone through before the 'open sesame' can be pronounced. But the results thus far attained amply counterbalance the obstacles which have been

encountered, and bid us to carry forward the enterprise of embossing books and constructing tangible apparatus, which was commenced in Boston forty-nine years ago.

This beneficent undertaking was the offspring of pure benevolence. It was adopted and improved by the fertile mind of Dr. Howe, cherished in its infancy by his warm enthusiasm and indomitable energy, and brought to maturity by the liberal contributions of some of the most distinguished members of our community. Works of various kinds have been published either by subscription or at the expense of generous and noble individuals; but these, compared with the riches of the realm of literature enjoyed by those who are blessed with sight, are but as a few crumbs, insufficient to satisfy the intellectual hunger of the blind. More are absolutely needed.

During the past year the work of our printing-office has been vigorously carried on, and several new volumes have been added to the list of our publications. The munificence of one of the kindest friends and noblest benefactors of the blind, at whose expense Higginson's "Young Folks' History of the United States" was embossed and electrotyped last year, and whose modesty withholds his name from the public ken, has enabled us to prosecute the publication of the manuals of ancient and mediæval history without interruption. The Rev. Photius Fisk of the United States Navy, a native of Greece and well known for various philanthropic deeds, has made a generous donation for embossing the history of his fatherland.

Another kind friend of the blind, Mrs. Julia B. Paine, has contributed one hundred dollars towards the expense of the juvenile series; and Mr. Henry B. Rogers, whose beneficent acts are numerous in our community, has added one thousand dollars to the permanent fund of our printing-office.

Through these and many other generous gifts previously made, new paths of knowledge and happiness have been opened to the blind. Hundreds of them have felt, in their solitude and darkness, how cheering and useful is intellectual light. But what they have already received is not enough. They ask for more. Shall their call be heeded? May we not hope that the voice of the same benevolence which has inspired the hearts of so many noble men and women with a desire to ameliorate the lot of those whose night endures from the cradle to the grave will whisper to others of high aim and purpose, "Go ye and do likewise?"

Our printing-office has recently undergone thorough renovation in every direction, and its working capacities have been greatly increased. It has been supplied with new presses, types, cases, machinery, appliances, fixtures and conveniences of the most approved kind, and put in an excellent condition to do good and steady service. It is in fact complete in all its appointments and well equipped in every particular. All that is now needed to promote its usefulness and make it what it ought to be — a perennial source of blessing to the blind — is a permanent fund, the income of which should be sufficient to defray its expenses. Doubtless there are many benevolent persons in our community who, if they understood the workings of this grand enterprise, would be willing to contribute to its success from their abundance. To them, and to all generous people whose hearts can be touched by the magnitude of the calamity of blindness and the needs of its victims, we appeal, and beg them to consider the claims of those members of the human family who cannot feast, as they do, at the broad table of universal literature, but to whose touch a few of its choicest morsels may be adapted if the means were given to us. A select library for their use is truly a great monument to benevolence and humanity; and we cannot but hope that some one will undertake to erect it in the near future.

Robert E. Apthorp,	Andrew P. Peabody,
John S. Dwight,	Edward N. Perkins,
Joseph B. Glover,	Samuel M. Quincy,
J. Theodore Heard,	Samuel G. Snelling,
Henry Lee Higginson,	James Sturgis,
James H. Means,	George W. Wales,

Trustees.

The perusal of the above appeal has created considerable interest in the community, and the sum of about seven thousand dollars has been voluntarily contributed to the printing fund by benevolent citizens. The conjuncture seemed an opportune one for the promotion of this cause, and measures were at once taken to improve it.

PROCEEDINGS OF A MEETING OF THE TRUSTEES.

On Friday, March 18, a special meeting of the trustees of the Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind was held to consider the matter of raising a printing fund, at which the director, Mr. Anagnos, at the request of the board, made substantially the following statement: —

"The ordinary income of the institution furnishes no surplus funds that can be employed in printing. The special printing fund will suffice for the production from the press of not more than two volumes a year. With a fund that would yield an income of $5,000 a year, the press might be kept in constant activity, and might issue twelve volumes or more per annum. The stock of literature for the blind is very meagre, and of limited range; while in every one of the New England states there are many blind persons who are able to read books in raised type, and who eagerly avail themselves of all opportunities for reading. The demand for books among the blind is very urgent. The utmost supply can give them a scanty library compared with that within reach of the poorest seeing person. It is eminently desirable that a printing fund of seventy-five thousand dollars be raised, and the generous contributions recently made to the existing fund indicate the present as a favorable time for action in this behalf."

It was then voted, on motion of Mr. Snelling, that a committee of the board of trustees and of the corporation be appointed to solicit contributions to the printing fund.

The following gentlemen were appointed members of this committee, with authority to add to their number any person willing so to serve.

Chairman, Samuel G. Snelling; Treasurer, P. T. Jackson; Secretary, M. Anagnos; Trustees, Robert E. Apthorp, Henry Lee Higginson, Edward N. Perkins, James Sturgis, George W. Wales; President of the Corporation, Samuel Eliot; late Treasurer, William Endicott, Jr.

Voted, that in pursuance of this end, a public meeting be called at such early time and at such place as the committee now appointed may think best.

A. P. Peabody, *Chairman.*
M. Anagnos, *Secretary.*

The following call for a public meeting was issued by a unanimous vote of the committee on the printing fund : —

Perkins Institution and Massachusetts School for the Blind,
Boston, March 25, 1881.

A public meeting will be held at the Tremont Temple on Friday, April 1, at 3 p. m., for promoting the cause of furnishing the blind with books in raised characters. His Excellency Governor Long has kindly consented to preside and open the meeting with a brief address, followed by Rev. Phillips Brooks, D. D. ; Rev. Edward Everett Hale, D. D. ; Rev. Dr. Withrow ; Col. Higginson ; Rev. F. M. Ellis, D. D. ; Rev. A. A. Miner, D. D. ; Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D. D., and other eminent speakers. There will also be music by the pupils of the Perkins Institution, and brief exercises in reading by the touch, geography, &c. Laura Bridgman will be one among the readers.

You are cordially invited to honor the occasion with your presence.

Samuel G. Snelling,	Samuel Eliot,
P. T. Jackson,	Wm. Endicott, Jr.,
Henry Lee Higginson,	Edward N. Perkins,
Robert E. Apthorp,	George W. Wales,
James Sturgis,	M. Anagnos,

Committee.

The sum of seventy-five thousand dollars would yield an adequate income for providing the blind of New England with a fair supply of literature in raised print, and we appeal to their friends, and to all benevolent persons, to co-operate with us in our endeavors to raise that amount of money.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING AT THE TREMONT TEMPLE.

In response to the above call, a very large audience, including some of the most prominent ladies and gentlemen of this city and neighboring towns, assembled in Tremont Temple on Friday, April 1, at 3 P. M. The meeting was in the highest sense characteristic of Boston. Upon the platform, besides His Excellency Governor Long, the speakers of the occasion, and the pupils of the Perkins Institution, were Hon. Samuel C. Cobb, T. G. Appleton, Samuel G. Snelling, Henry B. Rogers, Hon. James Sturgis, R. E. Apthorp, Dr. J. T. Heard, P. T. Jackson, Edward N. Perkins, and several other gentlemen.

The band of the institution opened with a selection composed by one of its members, after which Dr. Samuel Eliot, president of the corporation, stated the object of the meeting in the following words: —

REMARKS OF DR. SAMUEL ELIOT.

Ladies and Gentlemen: The trustees of the Perkins Institution have called this meeting in support of a movement begun some time ago among themselves in order to increase the supply of reading for the blind. This object will be fully explained in the course of these proceedings. The governor of Massachusetts has kindly consented to preside, and no one can perform this office more fitly than the chief magistrate of the commonwealth upon whose nursing care and bounty this institution has chiefly depended from its foundation. As His Excellency needs no introduction to his own people, I will simply thank him for coming here to help us, and ask him to take the chair.

His Excellency Governor Long, on taking the chair, addressed the meeting as follows: —

ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR LONG.

Both as the aim of personal interest founded on personal observation, and as representing the commonwealth, which is a generous contributor to the Perkins Institution for the Blind, I am happy to take part in the appeal which it now makes to you for aid. Associated as it is with the name of Howe, a resort as it is for the sympathies of Andrew, one of the few things in America that won the admiration of the youthful Dickens, forever illustrated by the story of Laura Bridgman, I know the hold it has upon the hearts of the people of Massachusetts. Still more would it touch your hearts, if in the institution itself you could see the intelligence and interest, the large and faithful lines of its beneficence; if you could hear its pupils discuss anatomy, and dissect and put together the parts of the model of the human framework; if you could listen to their clear statements of the processes of natural philosophy, illustrated by experiments as intelligently performed as by one having sight, and expressed with a clearness of language that no slave of the mere letter can equal. The object of this meeting is to give them the printed page still more liberally. Is it not strange? More reading for the blind! And yet their delicately trained fingers snatch from the book its contents quite as clearly, and almost as readily, as our eyes can do. It is one of the finest things in our civilization that we can thus turn, as we do to-day, from our ordinary pursuits to these tender charities on which we all agree. In that spirit we appeal to you to aid in still further laying open the world to the blind. Let them, too, have the delights in largest measure of the story of the historian and essayist. So shall we in this, as we are constantly in a hundred ways, make the miracle of twenty centuries ago but the veriest commonplace of every day — making the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see. Heaven be praised that the blaze that kindled the birth of Christianity is now a steady light that illumines the whole world. Let us be grateful that we live in a Christian land and Christian time. But let us also see to it that there be none so friendless, none so deprived by nature or accident of any gift, that they shall not enjoy all its blessings as well.

After prayer had been offered by Rev. J. L. Withrow, D. D., Mr. Anagnos, the director of the Perkins Institution, was introduced by the Governor, and spoke as follows: —

ADDRESS OF MR. M. ANAGNOS.

In all ages and in all countries blindness has been considered as the greatest of human misfortunes, and the condition of its victims has been a pitiable and abject one. Sympathy and material aid were readily bestowed upon sightless persons; but education, which alone could assist them to rise above the clouds of ignorance and prejudice, and to rest calmly in the great realities of existence by asserting their human attributes, was not considered feasible or practicable in their case until the latter part of the last century. It was in the year 1784 when the great apostle of the cause of the blind, the celebrated Abbé Valentine Haüy, sowed the fruit-seeds of their education first in Paris, where he established the *Institution des Jeunes Aveugles*, and afterward in St. Petersburg and Berlin. Most of these seeds were planted in fertile and genial soil, and they have multiplied until all the principal countries in Europe have their special institutions for the instruction of the blind in the rudiments of learning, in music, and in the mechanic arts. The most valuable characteristic in the educational methods of the great French philanthropist was his device of embossed print, by means of which the blind were enabled to read books in raised letters with their fingers, the sense of touch becoming so delicate and discriminating through constant practice as to serve as a partial substitute for that of sight.

The first movement in aid of the education of the blind in this country was inaugurated in Boston, and the merit of proposing the establishment of an institution for their instruction and training belongs to Dr. John D. Fisher of this city. While pursuing his medical studies in Paris, he paid frequent visits to the Institution for the Young Blind, and conceived the design of transplanting to his own country the advantages there enjoyed. After his return to Boston, in 1826, he kept the plan constantly in view, and consulted with some of the leading men of this city from time to time for its promotion. Many other Americans had, it is true, visited the Paris institution, and on their return had delighted their friends with the details of its curious methods of instruction and training. But none of them had ever before this time attempted,

by appeals to the public or otherwise, to bring these means within the reach of the blind of the new world. In February of 1829, an application was made to the legislature for an act of incorporation, which was granted unanimously in both houses without debate. The organization of the young institution began at once, but up to 1831 nothing was done further than to direct public attention to the object, and solicit aid for its accomplishment. In that year the late Dr. Samuel G. Howe, having just returned from the scenes of his philanthropic mission and military exploits in Greece, enlisted ardently in the enterprise, and gave it a practical form. He sailed immediately for Europe for the purpose of visiting establishments of a similar kind already in operation there, examining the methods of instruction therein employed, and engaging the services of competent teachers, and on his return in 1832, a school was opened under his superintendence in his father's house on Pleasant street. The beginning was made with only six children. Through the unremitting efforts of Dr. Howe, the pupils made rapid progress, and public exhibitions of their proficiency in study, music, and handicraft were given, which, according to the accounts of the day, caused a profound commotion. The merchant prince of Boston, Col. Thomas H. Perkins, attended one of these exhibitions, and was so touched by the performances, that he made a gift of his mansion on Pearl street to the school. Soon after a brilliant fair was held in Faneuil Hall by the most prominent ladies of the city, in aid of the enterprise, and sufficient means were raised for fitting up the building, and furnishing it with the necessary appliances and apparatus. Thus the infant institution was auspiciously launched in its career of usefulness, and has kept its place ever since in the foremost ranks of kindred establishments. It was very fortunate that the management of its affairs was entrusted to such a man as its great founder, who has often been called the "Haüy of America," and who contributed as much toward the elevation of the blind of this country as the French philanthropist accomplished for those of Europe. To the enthusiasm for the emancipation of the blind, and devotion to their cause, which distinguished the Abbé, the American philanthropist united the qualities of vast administrative ability and practical wisdom.

As soon as the school was removed to its new and commodious quarters Dr. Howe determined to carry out the design of furnishing the blind of this country with a choice library in raised characters, which he had formed and matured during his last visit in

Europe. He immediately procured a small press and established a printing-office, where all the real and substantial improvements on Haüy's invention of embossing books and on the modes of constructing apparatus adapted to the sense of touch were devised and carried out. The enterprise proved a success; but, as there was nowhere a permanent fund for its support, Dr. Howe had great difficulty in begging the money from various sources, and although the obstacles were numerous, and sometimes disheartening, he continued the work with occasional interruptions nearly to the end of his life. Thus about fifty books on different subjects were produced by our press during this long term of years, the edition of each work consisting of from two to three hundred copies. In addition to these there are in our library about fifty more volumes printed elsewhere. The cost of printing in relief very much exceeds that of producing a book in the ordinary way. You and I can purchase a good copy of the Bible for twenty-five or fifty cents; but the blind cannot obtain one which they can read with the tips of their fingers for less than TWENTY dollars. This price may seem very high, but I assure you that it is less than actual cost. Now, there are but very few sightless persons who are so favored with the goods of this world as to be able to pay so much money for books, for blindness is usually begotten of poverty, and in some instances it begets it. On the other hand, a little reflection will convince us that they need books more than we do. Blind persons are not in the least wanting in any of the characteristic attributes of humanity. They only lack some of the incidentals. Their sentiments, feelings, affections, desires, and aspirations are precisely identical with ours; but a part of the objective knowledge which ministers to all these and which is specially the legitimate product of the power of vision, is not so easily attainable in their case. They enjoy in common with us the peal of the thunder, the roar of the cataract, the murmur of the brook, the rustling of the leaves, the sighing of the wind, the song of the nightingale, the bleating of the lamb, and the chirping of the sparrow. Nay, they do more than this: their sense of hearing becomes so acute by constant practice that they are able to analyze sounds and find harmony where ordinary listeners cannot perceive a trace of it; but the majestic forms of the clouds, the colors of the rainbow, the plumage of the birds, the tints of the flowers, all the glad outward world, the varieties of trees and plants, the products of art and the wonders of nature, so far as perceptive

knowledge is concerned, are a blank to them. The dark veil which covers their eyes renders all the vast wealth of information and the means of daily comfort and enjoyment which are derived from the mere sight of natural objects inaccessible to them. Wherever they go they carry with them their chamber of darkness and isolation. Their night is in many cases a continuous one from the cradle to the grave. They long therefore for intellectual light, for the means of cheering their lonely hours, of lightening the burden of their calamity, and of brightening their existence. It is that a few rays of light may be let in upon that darkness and solitude by means of the embossed page and the sense of touch, permitting them to share in a larger degree with us the life of knowledge, intelligence, and happiness, that the present appeal is made. The book for the time being does this. It introduces into the mind of the blind, through the tips of their fingers, a flood of light, and enables them to enter into communion with the minds of eminent writers of the present and former times. It is to the improvement of their intellectual and moral nature what sunlight is to the growth of plants. In order to provide this inestimable blessing for the blind and furnish them with permanent means for intellectual expansion and enjoyment, we appeal to the public for a fund of $75,000. The income of this endowment, added to the very limited means already at the disposal of the institution, will enable us to issue ten or twelve new books every year and to place sets of them in the leading libraries of New England for free use, thus rendering embossed publications as accessible to the blind as works in common print are to those who can see. The plan of opening the public libraries to the blind is a grand one, for it will place them on the same footing in the republic of letters with their seeing fellow-men. When it is remembered that the poorest and lowliest child living in Boston has the choice of 386,000 volumes in the public library, and that sightless persons, who feel ten times more strongly the need of reading, have only one hundred books at their command, the necessity for increasing their present scanty supply can be fully appreciated. If the fund of $75,000 is provided at once, so that we may be able to continue issuing a dozen new books annually, it will take thirty years to add 360 volumes to those existing at present in our library; an insignificant number in comparison with the contents of the public libraries. This will show to every thinking person that our request is a reasonable and moderate one. We do not apply for a

very great variety of mental pabulum for our sightless children, nor do we ask for luxuries of intellectual food for them. We think it simply a matter of justice and true benevolence that a few crumbs from the immense riches of our literary tables should be brought within the reach of those who cannot feast on them in their ordinary form. In brief, our appeal is a call from the blind to the seeing for light. Is it possible that the people of Boston, to whose generosity and sense of justice belongs the honor of having kindled in America the Promethean fire of enlightenment for the blind, will not respond generously? Can it be that Massachusetts will ever turn a deaf ear to the call? Will the people of New England in general refuse to open to her sightless children those sources of intellectual pleasure and solace which are freely enjoyed by their more fortunate fellow-creatures? History, tradition, antecedent circumstances, and the never-failing liberal spirit manifested in every philanthropic movement, all lead us to trust the cause of the blind to the feeling hearts and generous hands of the good men and women of our community confidently, and leave no room for skeptical doubt as to its ultimate success.

Governor Long then introduced Rev. Phillips Brooks, D. D., who made one of his most eloquent appeals. Dr. Brooks spoke substantially as follows:—

The book printed in raised letters is the main window through which the blind can look out upon the great world of wit and wisdom, poetry and science. I had occasion to visit Harvard College and saw 250,000 books in the library, and could not help comparing it with the library of the school for the blind, where only 100 volumes were on the shelves, half of which were printed at the institution. The blind do not complain that they have so few books, but request that their library may be enlarged. The appeal now made is one of the strongest that can be made to a Christian community, which will not stop to consider what return those who ask for this aid can make to the givers; but, following the example of the Master, will be ready to supply the need because the need appears. To such the sufficient motive is the simple sight of those who cannot see. I do not for a moment think that the community will let this opportunity for assisting the unfortunate go by, and I feel no uneasiness in regard to raising a fund of $75,000. The idea of an endowment fund is of itself a peculiar incentive to

giving in such a cause. The money contributed is not intended to be spent at once. It is destined to constitute a permanent fund, the benefits of which shall not be confined to the present, but shall flow like the clear waters of a living stream from generation to generation and irrigate the broad fields of education for the blind. There are to be better and grander books in the future than have yet been written, and the sightless people of the coming generations should be given the opportunity to read them. Monumental stones to commemorate them after they have gone from this world are becoming less and less cared for by wise men. Rather would such a man have his monument in his work, that shall be continued not only while he lives but after he is dead, so long as there shall be need for that work to be done. He who contributes to this deed of charity can feel that not only the blind of to-day, but those who shall live in coming years, will regard him with gratitude; and the best monument we can raise to commemorate him who began this work fifty years ago will be the perpetuation and enlargement of the enterprise for the benefit of the blind children, who fifty and more years hence shall have cause to remember with gratitude what Dr. Howe did for them.

Dr. Brooks was followed by Dr. Hale, who spoke as follows:—

ADDRESS BY REV. E. E. HALE, D. D.

I am sure that your Excellency feels, as all of us do, who can look upon this assembly, that there is no need of any hard demonstration, to prove that our friends here have a right to the fund which is proposed. One sees at once—in looking upon the audience before us—that their sympathies are fully enlisted for those to whom we have just now listened, and to whom we are to listen again. None of us ask anything more than to have the best method shown, by which this daily necessity of the printed word may be supplied. It would not be difficult to make the demonstration, which our sympathies have already outrun. For one can never look upon an intelligent company of blind men, without asking himself how far they acquiesce, in their hearts, in that "equality before the law," which is certainly granted them in our constitution. I notice that they pay their poll-tax and all other taxes on their property, as I pay mine, and as your Excellency pays what the assessor demands. Mr. Fawcett, the blind Postmaster-General of

Great Britain, pays on the same scale and schedule as Mr. Gladstone or Lord Beaconsfield. How does such a blind tax-payer feel, I wonder, when he is told of these long ribbons of light,—extending north, south, east, and west,—like a cobweb laid over the whole of this city,—lighted up every night, as the lamplighter makes his rounds.* All that expense of lighting the streets which his Honor the Mayor finds necessary, and our friends at City Hall, is not needed by the musicians on the platform here. They thread their way at midnight from South Boston to the State House and back again, as readily as they do at noonday. How do such tax-payers feel when they are told that the city expends $122,000 a year for the Public Library, of which Mr. Anagnos has spoken—and that the city opens that library on terms of "perfect equality" to all the citizens? Of how much advantage is this expenditure to those who cannot see? When the safety of our lives is intrusted to a painted sign over the road-way,—bidding us stop while the bell rings,—what does a blind man say of the provision thus made for him? I might go on asking such questions. But I will say, very frankly, that I have never heard of a blind fellow-citizen who did attempt to enjoin the city treasurer from spending the public money for uses in which blind men have none of the advantage. Still, Mr. Governor, if there were any Mr. Gradgrind in this audience, who grudged the money these books will cost, I think you might fairly turn the tables on him, and ask him to make a few calculations. I think you might fairly ask him to calculate how large is the expense which state, county, and city lavish on purposes important only to us who see,—and from that calculation teach us what ought fairly to be spent for those who cannot make use of these expenditures. Mr. Gradgrind would find very soon, that if our friends here had simply their "equality of rights before the law," we might vote from your state treasury the pittance they ask for now, and the credit would still be in their favor.

But I have not risen to press any such close question of my right or his right or anybody's right! We meet in another mood, thank God,—and we do not approach this subject from Mr. Gradgrind's point of view. For one, I was glad to be asked to come here,—I am glad to be permitted to speak,—because I have the chance to express that gratitude, which I am sure I always feel when I visit the Perkins Institution at South Boston. I should be sorry, if,

* At an annual expense of $396,000.

from such a visit, I did not always come away a more cheerful man,—as I think I come away a wiser man,—as I hope I come away a better man. May I speak of only one lesson which these silent ministrations of the school yonder are teaching every day? They teach it in the still silence of her who is to be the orator of this occasion.

We are told every day, that new discoveries have been made as to the origin of our moral faculties, and of our spiritual aspirations. One cannot open a newspaper or a magazine now, without meeting the information that men were always mistaken in the past in attaching such importance to faith, and hope, and love. We are told that every day shows more and better the origin of fancy, of reason, and of other powers of the intellect. It seems that all these are not such realities as a foolish world once thought them, but that they are simply emanations or manufactures, resulting from fortunate physical combinations. Thus, I am taught now, that the origin of my love for my child, and the reason why my love is more exquisite or intense in any sense, than is the cooler emotion of an oyster, are to be found, both of them,—the origin and the reason,—in the superiority of my physical organization to that of the oyster. It seems, that a good way back toward what was not the beginning,—under the happy operation of a law of selection in which nobody selected,—under a *nisus* or effort of some ancestor of mine, who did not know he was striving, nor even knew how to make an effort,—certain unexisting organs got themselves organized; and that, by a series of such fortunate combinations of organizations, it results, at the present period, that I have the physical frame, which, in short, I am. The world has always been wrong, it seems, when it said, "In the beginning was the Word." And the world is now on the right track, if it says, "In the beginning was the Thing."

The Thing, I am told, has brooded unconscious and has unconsciously selected naturally,—till at the end I am so fortunate, that I love, I hope, and I believe. It is all the issue of my superior organization. These five senses of mine are so fine, that I must love, hope, and believe. Faith, hope, and love shine forth from them, as the glowing rays shine from a lighted candle. The more exquisite these five senses, the more perfect is what I had before been fool enough to call "spiritual life."

Such is the lesson which the nineteenth century is fond of teaching me. With the dust of it in my nose,—with the clay of it in

my ears,—with the dazzle of it in my eyes,—I cross the bridge, I walk up Broadway yonder, I am admitted by Mr. Anagnos into his charming family. I am permitted to talk with her who, in a few minutes, in the rapt silence of your sympathy, is to speak to you. I may listen to her, and try to fathom the length and breadth and depth and height of an infinite soul,—of a living child of a living God. And what does Laura Bridgman teach me? Those speechless lips,—those eyes without light,—those ears which vibrate to no thrill of music,—what do I learn from them?

Why! I do not talk with her an hour without learning this. It has not needed keen eyesight for tranquil faith! It has not needed a perfect ear, or easy intercourse between heart and heart, that she should know the loyalty and tenderness of mutual love,—love most abundant, in which she also bears the burdens of sisters and brothers, and lives in the common life of the children of a loving God. It is no trick of expression,—no happy organization of her powers of speech which has made her willing and ready to express the infinite hopes of all immortal beings, and look forward beyond the line of time. You cannot say that she created such faith and hope and love as she enjoyed the odors of the violet. They did not develop themselves as she tasted the flavors of food which was given her to feed the hunger of the flesh. Precisely because of her deprivation she can answer all these mocking questions of the mechanical theories with an eternal no! Such is the privilege of this sweet silent saint! Do you pity her for her deprivation? Yes, for you pity all sufferers. But, as always, you must feel that partial ill is universal good, when you find that one such instance—where all the senses most highly organized have been swept away—puts an end, forever, to the scoff which would persuade you that the infinite aspirations of a child of God are but the finite clatter of a machine.

For one, I am proud and glad, in whatever audience, and by whatever way, to express my gratitude for what the Perkins Institution has taught and is teaching to the world. And as the plan proposed to-day is the method which its friends put forward, as that by which we can best express in deeds our thanks to it,—I certainly trust that their modest appeal for the pittance they ask for, may be met cordially and immediately.

EXERCISES BY THE PUPILS OF THE PERKINS INSTITUTION.

At this point the programme was varied by the introduction of brief exercises in reading from embossed books, and other school studies, by the pupils of the Perkins Institution, which the audience greatly enjoyed, and of which the "Boston Journal" gave the following account: —

"A bright-looking, yet sadly darkened little boy began by reading about 'Brown and the Mill.' He was followed by a colored boy, somewhat larger, who delivered extracts from the first and fourth acts of Hamlet. Then two little boys, with shapely heads and flaxen locks, read alternately from the Bible. These were followed by a girl who gave, in a tone of refinement and a manner indicative of native intelligence, a little lecture on the anatomy of the heart, illustrated by a model. Two cunning little girls then read together with surprising facility some verses about 'The Nightingale that made a mistake.' Then a girl produced a stuffed fox with a bird in his mouth and proceeded to a capital little dissertation on quadrupeds and bipeds. A specimen of lessons in geography was given by two boys by means of a large map capable of being taken apart and showing in the outlines of the pieces when detached the shapes of the various states. The exercises proved exceedingly interesting and ingenious."

Governor Long, seeing that Mrs. Howe was present, invited her to the platform, where she spoke, without preparation, as follows: —

SPEECH OF MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE.

In rising to speak to you, ladies and gentlemen, without preparation, my thoughts involuntarily recur to two occasions which relate themselves in my mind, although with no other connection han that of the association of ideas.

One of these dates from my first visit to Greece, in which I saw for the first time the beautiful remains which crown the heights of the Athenian Acropolis. My first feeling was one of sorrow for the devastation which I beheld, and for the loss to the world of things which, in their completeness, must have been of such unparalleled beauty. But when, on looking again and again, I became aware of the great charm and value of what still remained visible and standing, my sorrow gave way to delight, and I felt more thankful for what had been spared than disturbed at the thought of what had been taken away.

The occasion which my thoughts couple with this one is that of my first visit, in early youth, to the institution for the blind at South Boston. I then took note for the first time of the condition of the blind, and felt the sorrow which naturally belongs to a sense of their great deprivation. As they stood up to sing, I remember that the sight, and the pathos of their voices moved me to tears. But when I had visited the pleasant school-rooms of the establishment, and had learned something of the efforts made to repair for these unfortunates the injustice of nature — when I saw, too, their cheerful and intelligent faces, their enjoyment of the means of education provided for them, then a revulsion of feeling took place like that which I have already described. I felt more inclined to give thanks for what was left to the blind people than to grieve over what they had lost.

I will relate another very small anecdote connected with my earlier acquaintance with the institution just mentioned. I was once visiting a sick friend whose room was in the upper story of the great building. It was already twilight, and while I talked with my friend, the darkness of night came upon us unawares. I wondered how I could possibly find my way down without a light; but my friend said: "Wait a little. One of the blind people will be sure to come before long, and any one of them will lead you safely through the passages and down the stairs."

Presently, we heard a firm step coming near us, and I said, "It can only be a blind person who walks so securely in the dark." This proved to be the case, and taking the hand of my blind guide, I was safely led through every intricacy, and down the several stairways, until I came where the lights made it possible for me to see for myself. Thus, if the blind cannot lead the blind, they may sometimes lead the seeing. And in this day, in which materialism and skepticism so often darken the guiding power of the mind,

who shall say but that the assured faith of those who walk by faith alone may often stand us in good stead? A happy insight into the deeper realities of life may be vouchsafed to those who do not see what we see, and this inner sense of theirs may help to lead us out of doubt and uncertainty into the fulness of the perfect light.

If I leave these now distant reminiscences in order to speak of that inspired soul, to which I have an especial right to appeal, I must bear witness to Dr. Howe's deep interest in the subject which has already been so ably presented for your consideration. He considered the multiplication of books for the blind a most important matter, and always labored to this end, often with results very disproportionate to his labor. He always grieved when the printing press of the institution lay idle, and rejoiced at nothing more than at receiving from time to time funds which would enable him to add a new volume to the scanty stock on hand. Now, I have observed that claims which should appeal most directly to the public are often obliged to wait their time. The tides which carry the affairs of men at last bring these claims into sight, and there comes a quickening of sympathy, and a zealous desire to repair past omissions, and the loss of time which these involve.

As I have looked upon this numerous assembly to-day, and have listened to the varied eloquence of those who have addressed you, I have felt almost sure that the time for our question has arrived, and that one of those tidal waves of sympathy of which I have just spoken will now carry it fully to the heart of the people. From that heart will come a response which will give joy and light to those who sit in darkness, and will do honor to the memory of the hero whose last and longest battle was for the aid and comfort of all whose use and enjoyment of this beautiful world are curtailed either by natural defect or unfortunate accident. Among these sufferers in many kinds, the blind were his nearest charge, and his dearest legacy to the community.

His Excellency next called upon the Rev. A. A. Miner, D. D., pastor of the Columbus Avenue Universalist Church, of whose response the following is an outline: —

DR. MINER'S ADDRESS.

Mr. President and Friends: While I bring to this occasion the common interest that moves all our hearts, I have a personal

ground of especial interest. Fifty years ago the past winter, it was my fortune to make my first essay at "school-keeping." Do not, I beg you, assume that I am old. Day before yesterday I rendered the funeral service of one almost forty years my senior. The truth is I was then very young, and was anxious chiefly to one end — to show that I could "keep school." For the comfort of Boston teachers, let me say, I taught for nine dollars a month and "boarded round," and I have always thought that I had the "best end of the bargain." The scene of my experiment was in the town of Hanover, New Hampshire, about four miles from Dartmouth College, and under the shadow of Moose Mountain, which stretches through the eastern part of the town.

While passing some days with a family in the southernmost part of the district, I called one evening with them upon a family just over the boundary in the adjoining district, in which a venerable friend by the name of Tenney made his home. The centre of all thoughts and the delight of all eyes, particularly of Mr. Tenney's, was a charming little girl in her mother's arms. Beautiful and sprightly, with every sense perfect, she promised, like all things of beauty, to be "a joy forever." A year or two later I met that venerable man, and with tears coursing down his cheeks he told me of the physical ruin of that dear child. That terrible scourge of childhood, the scarlet fever, had obliterated both sight and hearing, and as was supposed at the time, the sense of taste and of smell, though later years have proved both these retained in a feeble degree. Dumbness is consequent upon the loss of hearing. The few words she continued for a time to speak after her recovery were gradually lost, and silence and darkness shrouded her being. That child, now a woman, is on this platform. Of course you understand me to speak of Laura Bridgman.

Her whole attention was now concentrated upon the sense of touch. By the application of her hand to their features she grew to recognize the different members of the family, of the neighborhood, and of their not large circle of acquaintances and friends. If she discovered that a visitor was in the house she would immediately examine her mother's dress, and, if unsatisfactory, proceed to the wardrobe and bring forward what she deemed the circumstances to require.

Consider for a moment what the institution here represented has done for this woman. Recall these exercises and observe how the instruction given therein, in her case through the single sense

of touch, has put her in some measure in communication with highest things — the works of God below and the home of God above. Dark and cheerless as her life has necessarily been, consider what possible spiritual illuminations have fallen upon her pathways through its instrumentality. Consider the noble heroism of the man who had the faith and the courage to lay its corner-stone and rear the superstructure. Having signalized the far-reaching sympathies of his early manhood by his unselfish devotion to the cause of struggling Greece, and afterward to that of struggling Poland, he returned to his native land to expend his wealth of energies in shedding light upon sightless eyes and giving firmness to the steps of the blind. As his work grew upon his hands and his own resources were exhausted, he appealed to the commonwealth for aid in his humane endeavors; and, year after year, you and I, through our appointed representatives, gladly poured out our treasures, proffering the staff of the strong for the support of the weak.

Among both the fortunate and the unfortunate in this home of silent sympathy and peace, Laura Bridgman has been the cynosure of public attention and interest. Her presence and inexpressible needs have been the occasion for the constant manifestation of that which is highest and noblest in human attainment.

Fitting mention has been made of the demands of justice upon all our hearts in furthering the special efforts to meet the needs of all these dear ones. Unable to participate in many of the blessings and advantages of our civic and social expenditures, they may fairly demand that our means shall in part be expended for their now pressing wants.

Quite as emphatically in a very different way, justice challenges our service. They have greatly blessed us, and we owe them a suitable return. It is sometimes said of the aged and infirm that "their days of usefulness are past." Such sayings betray an utterly secular view of life. Not possessions but character should claim our highest thought. Whatever tends to quicken our sympathies, invigorate our philanthropies, and extend the scope of our humanities, comes to us with highest power to bless. What influence in the domestic circle more effectually appeals to the tenderer sentiments of the young heart than does the presence of a venerable grandmother in her arm-chair? Everything yields to her convenience. The whole household defers to her judgment. The children anticipate her every wish. She is the centre of all

domestic revolutions. Highly favored are the youth reared in such a home. To none do they owe a greater debt of obligation for that which is highest and best within them than to the most helpless and at the same time the most venerable member of the family sanctuary.

Kindred to this is the service which Laura Bridgman and her peers have rendered to our commonwealth and country. She has appealed, as only one in such an extremity can appeal, to the deepest and holiest sentiments within us, commanding their tribute and establishing their dominion. The commonwealth is more humane because of her instructive and inspiring presence. Our charities are more spontaneous, and their application more discriminating and varied. Since she has done so much for us, it is but just that we should respond to the call of the institution which has nurtured her. And if in blessing her we bless many with her, our joy in giving should be correspondingly enhanced.

Dr. Miner was followed by the Rev. F. M. Ellis, D. D., pastor of the Tremont Temple, who spoke as follows: —

REMARKS OF DR. ELLIS.

"The world of the blind," said Mr. Prescott, "is circumscribed by the little circle which they can span with their own arms — all beyond this has no real presence to them." The instruction beneficial to this class is, of course, of a special character. Mental improvement with this class, as with all others, must be sought not alone for its own sake, but it must secure their elevation from pauperism, to which, because of their calamity, they are especially exposed, and secure for them, furthermore, the respectability and independence of personal support.

In every country the blind form an important class of the population, and their peculiar misfortune always appeals with tenderness to the sympathy of the philanthropic.

In temperate regions the proportion of the sightless to the seeing is about one to each thousand, hence our country has fewer of this class than other parts of the world. For example: the statistics of 1870 gave us but one blind person to nearly each two thousand, while in France there was one to each nine hundred and thirty-eight; and in Egypt there was for each two hundred who could see one who could not see.

It is a noticeable fact, also, that the number of persons *born* blind is so very small.

The estimate made for this country places over fifty per cent. of our blind people at ages ranging above forty-eight years.

The first institution for the blind, worth the name, was that founded by Louis IX., in 1260, for the special benefit of his soldiers who had lost their sight in Egyptian campaigns. This institution, which is still standing, receives an annual income of some $80,000 ! This institution was by no means a pioneer in the education of the blind. Indeed, little or nothing had been done in this direction previous to the year 1790, although books in relief had been printed four years before, in the year 1786.

On the Continent these institutions are mostly under the patronage of individual and corporate charity. In our country, however, we have as a provision for our twenty thousand blind people, thirty public institutions, besides others that are under the control of private charity. Of these thirty public institutions, twenty-two are under state control. From the year 1832 to 1877 there were admitted to these schools over eight thousand pupils, who were taught by some five hundred teachers. The annual appropriations to these public institutions have reached over seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars ; and the value of the buildings and grounds thus used exceeds four and a half millions of money.

The oldest of these American institutions for the blind is the one in whose interest you are here assembled to-day. This was chartered in the year 1829, and opened in August, 1832, taking its name, as you are aware, from Col. Thomas H. Perkins, who donated his valuable mansion to the interests of this noble work.

While as a people we may very justly congratulate ourselves in view of the fact that the blind of our country are socially far above those of other countries, still, it seems to me, we ought not only to greatly enlarge our plans of education for this class, but more needs to be done to make the plans we have more effective.

In looking over the last report of this institution I notice that the whole number of embossed books published by the printing department is forty-four, — these are in sixty-six volumes ; and what seems remarkable is, that these books are furnished at the average price of $1.87 per volume. Of these publications I noticed, also, the following classification : elementary works, 8 ; historical, 8 ; scientific, 7 ; poetical, 4 ; biographical, 3 ; fiction, 3 ; general literature, 2 ; and religious, 9.

In addition to the commendable work done by this department in book-making, it is worthy of notice furthermore, that a most needed work is being done, also, in the preparation of admirably executed wall maps, dissected maps, ciphering boards, writing tablets, etc., etc.; having furnished twenty-three different kinds of these appliances and tangible apparatus.

In these books, and others like them, a few crumbs, and only a few, from the vast storehouses of books, a few trickling drops from the great fountains of knowledge have been brought to the hungering and thirsting minds of the blind. We who may sit at the banqueting tables of books, periodicals, daily and weekly papers, almost without limit and almost without price, should not forget the needs of those who to-day are living upon the crumbs that have fallen from our overloaded boards. These people are the best of readers, for they read the books they have into themselves, while we, who see and may command libraries, but glance at books, appalled at the utterly enormous supply before us, and sigh that life is so short. We rejoice that our improved methods of education for the blind are placing at their fingers' ends the riches of the world's thought; and thus the circumscribed horizon encircled by their outstretched hands is growing larger and larger. Through their sense of hearing music has enriched the souls of the blind with melody and harmony, and their remarkable capacity for music suggests capacities as remarkable for literature and science; and the illustrations given you by these pupils this afternoon certainly demonstrate to the most skeptical that no field of education offers to the faithful and loving larger rewards than that field in which Perkins Institution holds so honorable a position.

The blind have a marvellous history behind them, which is, of itself, an inspiration to every blind student to do his best. Look at their triumphs over this almost hopeless hindrance. They have left an imprint upon the culture of both past and present. Theirs has been a triumph and success that entitle them to a citizenship in the republic of letters. This past, so eloquent, is our fullest warrant, if warrant be needed, for the most enlarged methods and tireless endeavor in bringing the largest area of the best thought of the past within the sphere of their touch and mastery. The representatives of the blind, in the past, stand forth as crowned kings. Call to mind linguists and mathematicians such, for example, as Didymus of Alexandria, Saunderson of Cambridge, Euler, Henry Moyes, and Francisco Salinas of the University of Salamanca. Of poets, such

as Homer, Milton, Dr. Blacklock, and the Italian Scapinelli. Of such naturalists as Huber; such civil engineers and surveyors as John Metcalf of England, and Count de Pagan (the father of the military science of fortifications); of such philosophers as the preceptor of Cato, Diodotus, and Nicasius (of the University of Cologne).

But how are these treasuries of letters, this inestimable blessing of books, to become the heritage of the blind? How are libraries to be made available to those who read with their fingers as they are to those who have eyes to read with? Such men as Dr. Howe and Mr. Reardon are solving these vital practical questions effectively. Such patrons of the blind, and of the tireless, self-devoted men who are toiling for them, as Peter C. Brooks, John C. Gray, Samuel May, John Preston, Amos A. Lawrence, Thomas Roche, Dr. Eliot, Henry Cabot Lodge, Chaplain Fisk, and others,—yes, solved by others also, who are unknown, as one of our Boston business men, who by his noble generosity is silently building a monument in the gratitude of those who are enjoying his beautiful benevolence that will last when the obelisk lately placed in Central Park shall have crumbled back to dust.

Surely, no interest appeals to your sympathy more modestly, more eloquently, or more worthily than this hunger and need of the blind for books and that amelioration and elevation which books give.

Governor Long then called upon the Rev. James Freeman Clarke, — a life-long friend of the late Dr. Howe, — who responded as follows: —

REMARKS OF DR. CLARKE.

I have no doubt, your Excellency, that the fund needed will be provided, and I do not feel that I am able to add anything to the statement of Mr. Anagnos. That statement, those facts, are surely all that is necessary in a community like ours, — a community of ample resources and large generosity, — a community which has always given, always given and always will give to any object which it sees to be good. This institution and its work are perfectly known here. It is not a new thing, not an experiment. No one has ever questioned its utility. No one has ever doubted the fidelity and judgment with which it has been administered. It is

open to the inspection of all. Here we bring together those who have the misfortune of being deprived of one avenue of access to nature and man, — one great means of enjoyment, improvement, activity, — with "wisdom at one entrance quite shut out." Here their lot is lightened, and a way is opened for them into new hopes and joys. They are taught to read, as we have seen them read here, by the tips of their fingers. We are now asked to give them more books; that, having learned to read, they may have something to read. We, whose eyes God has mercifully spared, — we, who can look on nature through the changing year, — see clouds and sky, fields and hills, daylight and moonlight, the tender beauty of flowers, the intelligence of the human face, — we, too, beside all this, wish for books. How much we should lose without them; how unwillingly we should spare any. If some Hindoo God of Destruction had power to destroy all the copies of any one of our great authors, what a loss to mankind! Which one could we surrender? Could we give up Walter Scott, or Wordsworth, Bacon, Locke, Dr. Johnson, Macaulay? Would we let Homer, Virgil, Horace disappear from all libraries forever? Could we spare Dante or Milton, Spenser or Tasso, Rousseau or Schiller? Of all these our blind friends are deprived. We mourn over the lost books of Livy, but they cannot read those that have never been lost. Let us enlarge their library a little. Let us create for them a Walter Scott, a Washington Irving, or a Prescott. Give a few thousand dollars, and, for all the blind in the United States, you bring into the world anew such authors as these.

Now the good people of Boston give to things far off and doubtful with a perpetual liberality. From all parts of the land, every man who has an imaginary college, a university on paper, or a scheme for helping on some reform in Idaho or Arizona, comes direct to Boston, and goes away with his pockets full of money. We are not as strict in investigating such cases as we ought to be. I heard of an institution in South Carolina or Georgia, for which funds were earnestly solicited and largely obtained by means of a printed programme, on which were the names of numerous professors and some hundreds of students. As far as I can find out, after some careful inquiry, no such institution has ever been heard of by the people of the region where it is supposed to be located. Instead of giving aid to such fabulous charities, would it not be better to contribute to a cause like this, of the benefit of which no one can doubt?

Such institutions, which seek to help the weak and forlorn, are in accord with the spirit of Christianity. The philosophy of this world says, "Progress comes from making the strong stronger, and letting the weak perish. Lay out your strength on that which produces the largest results. Let the fittest survive, and the unfit die." But Christianity has always devoted its best strength to helping those lowest down, and farthest away from prosperity. The leper, the outcast, the insane, the ignorant, have had the care and love of its highest saints. Its motto is, "Those who are whole need not a physician, but those who are sick." This may not be in accordance with political economy, but it is in full accordance with the spirit of the Master.

If our dear friend who began and carried on this institution, and gave his best life to it, could be asked what statue or monument he would most desire in commemoration of his devoted labors, I am sure he would say, "Do something for my blind people." Some monument ought surely to be erected to this remarkable man, — this mediæval knight born in prosaic New England; this Bayard without fear or reproach, who went to fight for freedom in Greece, Poland, and Paris, and seemed only at home when in the midst of the rush and roar of battle. Consider such a man as this, this soul of fire, devoting himself through long years to the idiots and the blind, tenderly leading the imprisoned soul out of its darkness into light, giving most love to the most disinherited, — a soldier by his temperament, a reformer by his genius, a helper of the helpless by his convictions! Let this fund be the monument to the memory of our New England hero, Samuel Gridley Howe.

LAURA BRIDGMAN.

The exercises closed with reading by Laura Bridgman, and with a piece by the band. Laura's reading is thus described by one of the newspapers: —

"Laura Bridgman, to whom much attention was directed, then came forward, accompanied by another blind lady, Miss Carrie Parks, who acted as interpreter to the audience. Miss Bridgman, being deaf and dumb as well as blind, manifested in her singular accomplishments the extraordinary training of the institution with which she has been identified almost since its foundation. She traced the raised letters with the fingers of her left hand, and at the same time communicated with her companion by a peculiar sys-

tem of pressing with the right hand, the latter announcing the words read to the audience. As the countenance of the remarkable lady was almost lit up with the intelligence and emotion accompanying the consoling words she read from the Scriptures, and her fingers twitched in the strange convulsive way by which she spoke to her companion, a breathless interest was displayed by all present, and the blending of ingenuity, patience, and philanthropy by which such results were wrought, made the strongest possible plea for the object of the meeting."

LAURA BRIDGMAN TEACHING OLIVER CASWELL TO READ EMBOSSED LETTERS.

Dr. C. A. Bartol sent the following letter to Governor Long, expressing his regret at being prevented from attending the meeting, as he had intended to do: —

DEAR GOVERNOR, — Unable to attend the meeting, let me say how warm is my interest in its object. If we grope after a spark of intelligence in the ashes of idiocy at South Boston; if we try to put out the fire of insanity at Somerville, shall we not afford light

to the blind, potentially sound of mind! An English poet has written, of the imagined scene of the crucifixion, —

"The eyes thou openedst calmly viewed thy fate."

It seems to me an impossible situation. Gratitude is sure in such a case, and the blessing of God cannot be postponed.

Cordially always yours,

C. A. Bartol.

The occasion left an impression of profound interest on all present, and awakened an enthusiasm in the community which will continue to be felt for a long time. A writer in the "Daily Advertiser," personally acquainted with the blind and the institution, thus describes the scene: —

"LIGHT FOR THE BLIND.

"The meeting held at Tremont Temple last week was the opening throb of a great awakening interest in the literary progress of the blind, whose education and welfare have always formed one of the prominent objects to which the philanthropically-minded of our good city have been devoted. It need hardly be said that the blind as a class stand centuries in advance of where they stood fifty years ago. They are well taught as children, and well considered as citizens. The magic touch which shall elevate them into literary equality with their fellow-men was given fifty years since. Its full fruition will be seen when their library is extended and placed on as firm and broad a basis as that of their seeing friends.

"The name of their faithful and untiring friend and benefactor, Dr. S. G. Howe, was often invoked in the meeting held on Friday last. It seemed, indeed, as if his spirit brooded over the large, sympathetic assembly, and breathed in the noble words that were spoken from the platform. Never have the walls of Tremont Temple resounded to mightier or more pathetic appeals than those which rang out there on that day. The noble, powerful eloquence of Phillips Brooks, the silver poetry of Edward Everett Hale, the warming, stirring words of Doctors Ellis and Withrow, Clarke and Miner, bore onward, as on angelic wings, the mighty theme which was put before the meeting — that of the more perfect and

entire emancipation of the blind from the trammels of their misfortune. And when the silent figure of Laura Bridgman was brought forward, and her pathetic reading of the Scriptures interpreted to the audience, the emotion of all present was something indescribably tender and profound. The music of the older pupils, the literary exercises of the little children, whose tiny voices had a singularly clear, sweet effect when heard in that immense building, all formed one strong, intense, irresistible appeal for 'more light!'

"The dying words of the great poet, how fitly do they sound on the lips of innocent childhood, as the sage, charmed with days and hours, and the little creature whose life has hardly yet begun, both crave of the Divine Helper, and of their earthly friends who supplement his boundless care, the great gift of the universe — light, light. The answer is always fitted to the need. The greater the want, the greater are the helpers; and daily instances of kindly feeling and beneficence come to cheer the pioneers on their steep and rugged upward path. That they may reach those heights toward which their endeavors are directed, emerging from doubt and difficulty into perfect clearness and security, is the ardent wish of all who know and love the blind. To them the community owes much in the way of music, in the example of a dignified and cheerful endurance of misfortune, and in the enthusiasm and affection which they have awakened, and which doubly bless the giver. Shall it not repay them manifold, reward them for their misfortunes, and put into their hand the golden key of knowledge, enjoyment, and future usefulness?

"How the huge library of the seeing world seems to mock with its vastness the tiny resources of the blind reader! How the appeal made by the speakers for a very modest number of new books for the blind contrasts with the boundless profusion in which their seeing brothers revel! What a lesson there is in all this of contentment, of thankfulness, of moderation! How happy does the blind man feel himself in the possession of every new literary treasure which is placed within his grasp! How coolly the seeing man turns over the last new publications, as they lie heaped beside him on his desk, and wonders whether they are worthy of his notice and perusal! It is the old story of rich and poor, plenty and famine, hut and palace, side by side. Let us read the mighty lesson. If we con it half as swiftly as the blind man reads with his fingers the white-paged book we lend him, we

shall become learned in the lore of charity, chivalry, and aid to the needy and uncomplaining.

"Suppose, as Mr. Hale so eloquently remarked, that 'Mr. Gradgrind' were to find his newspapers blank, his books dumb and unable to comfort and cheer him. How much poorer would he be in available literary opportunities than the blind, even at this advanced day of their intellectual and material progress? They can, it is true, have books read aloud to them; but what is this dependent pleasure compared to the infinite enjoyment and sense of power in having a wide scope of literature at one's own command, to roam over fields of philosophy or pleasure unaided and unhindered? Nothing, verily.

"It is contrast that brings out in the strongest relief the tragedy of life; and, while we would not dwell unnecessarily on the darker and less healthy side of the picture, we cannot but remember that it is under this aspect that it presents itself most forcibly to the unfortunate. For us the sunshine which we can daily enjoy drives away the shadows on which the mind is sometimes fain to dwell. To those who must sit forever in the shadow let us stretch out, in all the strength and sincerity of pitying love and a desire to aid them, a helping hand."

NOTICE.

BOSTON, May 11, 1881.

THE subscriptions to the printing fund from the meeting held at Tremont Temple on the first of April to date amount to about one-fourth of the sum for which the friends of the blind appealed to the public. As the money needed for this noble enterprise is coming in rather slowly, the generous and benevolent of the community, into whose hands this pamphlet may fall, are earnestly requested to consider the great need of the blind for more light upon their darkened path in life, and to open to them the doors of their beneficence and good-will. When the strong and striking contrast between the library of the sightless and that of the seeing is remembered, the scantiness of the one is pathetic as compared with the overflowing abundance of the other. One hundred books stand on the shelves of the Perkins Institution for the Blind at South Boston, some of which are nearly worn out by constant use; three hundred and eighty-six thousand on those of the public library of the city of Boston. The appeal of the blind is, we feel, a modest one. It is not for alms that they stretch their hands. It is the bread of intellectual life for which they ask; and this, we hope, will not be denied to them.

For the Committee on the Printing Fund,

SAMUEL G. SNELLING, Chairman.
M. ANAGNOS, Secretary.

(Mar., 1890, 20,000)

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